

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES

October 6, 2005

Members Present: Al Byam (Co-Chair), Barbara Sutherland (Co-Chair), Doris Holden (Treasurer), Rosemary Kofler, Tom McAuley

Absent: Henry Peirce, Frank Lattuca, Elsie Fetterman, Susan Whitbourne

Staff Present: Nancy Pagano (Interim Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Program Director/Services), Marlene Barnett (Program Coordinator)

Others: Jean Haggerty, Marge Babb, Ed Kaylor

Welcome

Meeting called to order at 9:03 AM. Barbara Sutherland, Co-Chair welcomed all members and guests.

Minutes of Meeting

Minutes of September 8, 2005, were reviewed and accepted as written.

SENIOR TRUST

Treasurer's Report:

Doris Holden reported that there was little activity in the past month. There was one check written for scholarships. The balance in the checking account is \$537.28. The total assets are \$84,029.03. The Treasurer's report was accepted as written.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Senior Trust Direction:

Nancy spoke of the Sept 29th meeting with Barry, John Musante and Alan Seewald that she, staff and some COA members attended to further discuss the implications and limitations of moving the Senior Trust money to the Town or to the Community Foundation. It was decided that another meeting with the Community Foundation was needed as the Senior Center needs quick access to funds for the Senior Travel Club and the Senior Center Club. No vote was taken today.

COA By-Law Update:

Barry's summary of the proposed changes to the Town By-Law establishing the COA must go forward to Town Meeting and be voted on. Discussion: the statement "...a majority of whom must be over 60 years of age." is age discrimination and would most likely need to be defended at Town Meeting. No other Town committees or boards have this stipulation. Rosemary asked if it would be discriminatory if worded, "some members of which shall represent those who are age 60 and over"...Nancy felt that was better, but stressed the final decision rest with the Town Manager, and we don't want to bind his hands with making a decision. Tom felt the way it was written was fine as this is the COA which is for senior citizens. Doris stated that if someone is interested in being on the COA they file a Citizen Activity form at Town Hall and the nomination committee would recommend a person to the Town Manager. Rosemary moved to change the statement to "some members of which would represent those age 60 and over". The motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote, all in favor.

COA By-Laws:

Draft 3: Article IV, Membership states "Amherst residents". The Town By-Law does not require that committee and board members be Town residents. Doris stated that people who are not Amherst residents who are involved in Town could be very helpful. She made the motion to move the first sentence of Article IV Membership "The Council shall consist of nine members to be appointed by the Town Manager." This motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote all in favor.

On Page 3, Article IV Meetings, Section 2a. The statement "The chair (shall be the CEO of the Council). Rosemary made the motion that the statement, "The chair shall preside at all meetings" be adopted and the statement "and shall be CEO of the Council " be deleted. The motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote, all in favor.

Al moved to accept the new by-laws as amended. The motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote all in favor. Doris stated that we need to make sure the date of the amendments being passed is put on the final copy of the by-laws.

NEW BUSINESS

Moving of Program Money (\$9,700) to Town Account:

This money was donated to the Senior Center in 2003 by an anonymous donor to assist with programming at the Senior Center. The money was deposited into the Trust and has been drawn on a few times. Nancy talked about moving the money into a Town account in order for it to be more accessible when it is needed. She stated accessibility will be very important this coming year. Nancy stated the COA needs to consider a vote to have Doris write a check for the \$9,700 to move to a gift account with the Town. A motion to move the \$9,700 remaining program money to a Town Gift account was made, seconded and passed on a voice vote, all in favor.

COA Retreat:

Nancy stated there would be a mini-retreat for staff and COA members on December 1, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm in the Ann Whalen Community Room. Lunch will be included. The focus will be long-range planning. Susan Whitbourne is helping Nancy with planning the retreat. Professor Shue will give a presentation on baby boomers and Susan will also present. Members of the Town's Comprehensive Planning Committee will be at the retreat also. Nancy spoke of the importance of planning for the boomers; it's a Revolution of Longevity. Massachusetts is one of the leading states with an older population and Amherst is one of the towns where that is especially true. The focus/task as a Council and staff is to determine how the boomers will affect what we provide; we need to learn as much as possible.

STAFF REPORTS

Outreach Project:

The survey will begin next week. There are two students from Susan Whitbourne's class who need to do 7-8 hours/week of community service and two elders who will all do the interview. Marlene and Maura held a two-hour training and the interviewers received all the necessary paperwork to begin the survey. Each of them has a packet of information on what the Senior Center provides that will be given to all elders in Amherst.

"The Open Road; Aging in America":

This is a 60 minute DVD of the coming boomers aging. We will show this documentary on November 10, at 1:00 PM followed by a panel discussion. All COA members are invited to attend.

The Walking Group:

This new group meets at the Senior Center on Thursdays at 8:30 AM and leaves for an hour long walk. There were seven people that walked and they have been exploring downtown Amherst; just enjoy walking and talking. Jean Haggerty spoke about the walking group out of the Ann Whalen Wellness Program that walks on Wednesdays at 11:30 AM; anyone is welcome to join them.

Computer Gallery:

In the Gallery, there are six new computers hooked up to the Town network with two more coming. There are two old computers to give away. The IT dept will oversee the computers and they are going to buy a piece of technology that will make much of the Boltwood Walk area wireless. It'll be a service for the community.

Chris Pacunas, IT Dept Head, came to the HVES noon lunch, gave a presentation on what the IT dept does and ate lunch with the elders. He indicated he'd look into his budget to see if the IT dept could take over paying the \$100/month internet access fee for the Senior Center.

Computer instructors- we have a few available. We haven't been utilizing the computers enough. We need more complex and higher technology training for elders and boomers. Tom McAuley and Nancy will look into Senior Net. Tom went to the South Hadley Senior Center to check out the computer classes they are offering. He indicated they have an introduction to the internet and Microsoft word class, a genealogy program and Quicken, financial software.

MCOA Annual Conference Highlights:

On Wed, Sept 21st the entire staff attended the first day of the MCOA Annual Conference. Nancy and Maura attended the 2nd day as well.

Nancy: D.E.C.I.D.E. Develop Elders Choices In Defensive Education. This program looks at self defense, safety on the streets and other safety issues pertinent to elders. Nancy is working with the Sheriff's Office and the Chief of Police to have Police officers trained.

ABC's of Time Management: very good to know its okay to claim time in your work to be better organized, as in your life.

Other staff spoke of workshops they attended that were very interesting. Nancy stated that it cost \$550 for the staff to attend this conference and the money had to be taken from Center Activities as there isn't any money in the budget for trainings. It is very important for staff to remain up to date and get the boost from attending conferences.

Pandemic Flu:

Nancy, Marlene and Jean Haggerty went to a training run by the Mass. Dept of Health and the CDC which sought feedback from participants on how to decide who will get the vaccine first as there will not be enough. The government is in the process of setting priorities for the vaccine.

COA members received a packet of information which includes a Power Point presentation on the pandemic. The vaccine is not available and will not be available until after the pandemic hits as it has not yet been developed. It's important that we keep up to date on this issue as it will definitely have a drastic effect on elders, particularly those who are frail.

Jean indicated the information she received she passed along to the six UMASS nurses who work with the Wellness Program at Ann Whalen. They will pass it along to residents at Ann Whalen and Chestnut Ct.

Health Fair/Flu Clinic:

The Health Fair/Flu Clinic will be held Saturday, November 19th at the Regional Middle School, 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM.

SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES

HVES:

Barbara Sutherland spoke of the October 3rd meeting she attended where Nancy Gavryck was the presenter. The FY'05 fiscal expenditures information was given out.

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

Jean spoke about the second community forum that was held Sept. 29th. 114 seats had been set up, but many more were required. She estimates that probably 157 to 160 people attended. There were three areas: transportation, finance and development that were focused on and it appears there will be much volunteer input and participation in this project.

Transportation:

Al just attended the annual transportation meeting. A six-year reauthorization of the transportation bill was passed, but Al indicated people are nervous about the administration looking at federal transportation money to use for rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina.

With the PVTa, they've made a \$2 million request for fuel and if that is not received there may be deep cuts in January. The FY07 budget cycle begins next month.

Housekeeping:

The agenda, minutes, materials will be available on a card table by the door at each COA meeting.

Next meeting is Thursday, November 10, 9:00 am – 10:30 AM.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:24 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Maura E. Plante, Program Director/Services